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AN  
ADDRESS,  
DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
ARCHÆAN SOCIETY  
OF  
BELOIT COLLEGE,  
AT ITS ANNIVERSARY  
JULY 13, 1858.

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BY CARL SCHURZ.

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B. E. HALE AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS.  
1858.

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*B. E. Hale & Company.—Cylinder Steam Press.*



BELOIT COLLEGE, July 14th, 1858.

Hon. Carl Schurz :

DEAR SIR : We take pleasure in transmitting to you a Resolution of the Archæan Society, adopted at a special meeting held this evening, expressing their estimation of your Address, last evening, and requesting a copy of it for publication ; and we hope it will be your pleasure to comply with the request.

*“Resolved,* That we regard the Address delivered by Hon. Carl Schurz before this Society, on Tuesday evening, July 13th, as a profound and valuable Discourse upon the prominent features of “ Americanism ;” and considering it the result of the maturest thinking upon our Institutions of one whose education and experience in a foreign country render his opinions of peculiar value, we feel greatly indebted to him for the honor and profit of its delivery before the Society. Believing that its publication would gratify both those who heard it and many who did not, we respectfully solicit a copy of it for this purpose.”

Yours, with much Respect,

HORATIO PRATT,

J. H. EDWARDS,

*Committee.*

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WATERTOWN, JULY 24th, 1858.

Messrs. Horatio Pratt, J. H. Edwards, *Committee* :

GENTLEMEN — The flattering terms in which the Resolution passed by the Archæan Society, speaks of my discourse, however gratifying and encouraging they must be to me, cannot make me forget how little I was able to do justice to the grand subject on which I had the honor to address so distinguished and indulgent an audience. The narrow space of a single Address did not permit me to offer you more than a desultory sketch of a multitude of topics, each of which is so comprehensive and so deserving of elaborate exposition. I intended, therefore, to remodel the whole, and to complete my remarks upon several branches of the subject before offering the manuscript for publication. But as your letter and those of other esteemed friends led me to believe that the Address is desired to be published as it was delivered, I send it to you in its original form. If it should succeed in kindling and nourishing in some of its readers a clear consciousness of the great mission of this country, I shall deem myself amply rewarded.

Yours Truly,

C. SCHURZ.



## AMERICANISM.

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IF for the purpose of selecting a subject for this Address I had descended into the pyramids of Egypt, or the classical ruins of Athens, or the catacombs of Rome, I would perhaps have better conformed to established customs; and I would, certainly, have imposed a much easier task upon my very limited abilities. For I consider it less difficult to treat of a matter of mere historical knowledge, or of mere literary interest, than to speak, with the impartial calmness of a scientific disquisition, of living things—of ideas which daily move our hearts and inspire our thoughts. But I have chosen this task, not as though the treasures of antiquity had no charms for me, but because, when studying the past, I cannot abstain from drawing conclusions on the present; and when thinking of by-gone generations, I instinctively calculate their value for that world of ours, in whose veins the warm blood of life is still flowing.

Our age is the *Era of Results*. It harvests the crops sown in by-gone centuries: it investigates the principles which have ruled the world from the beginning, applies them to given matter and creates new things by combination. It discovers, anew, theories which have long lain idle, and introduces them into practical existence. It holds abstractions in its powerful grasp, and transforms them into living realities. The time is past, when a man would consider it his calling to retire into the dead tranquillity of monasterial seclusion in order to brood over musty manuscripts, merely for the sake of amusing his mind by a contact with things that have ceased to be. We, in whatever we do, want to feel the touch of the warm hand of actual life,

To be useful, is the great motive idea in all our pursuits, both ideal and material; and into the service of this universal tendency we press, not only the strength of our own arms, and the activity of our own brains, but all the results of history, from the facts and discoveries and inventions of the day just past, up to the remotest historical recollections of the human race. With us, science has ceased to be a mere amusement of the mind: after its results we measure its value. History does more than merely enliven our imagination with incidents and scenes: it is more to us than a series of anecdotes. Its results determine to us its importance.

I intend to speak of America as the great representative of the spirit of this age. And when I use the word AMERICANISM, I do not mean that narrow and poor policy which certain men apply to certain political questions, but the ideal nature of this country, of this people, and of their institutions.

It is one of the earliest recollections of my boyhood, that one summer night our whole village was astir in consequence of an uncommon occurrence. I say our village, for I was born in a small hamlet not far from that beautiful spot where the Rhine rolls his green waters out of the wonderful gate of the Seven Mountains and meanders with majestic tranquility through one of the most glorious valleys of the world. That night our neighbors were pressing around a few wagons, covered with linen sheets and loaded with household utensils and boxes and trunks, to their utmost capacity. One of our neighboring families were moving far away across a great water, and it was said that they would never again return. And I saw silent tears trickling down weather-beaten cheeks, and the hands of rough peasants firmly pressing each other, and some of the men and women hardly able to speak when they nodded to one another a last farewell. At last, the train got into motion; they gave three cheers for AMERICA, and then, in the first gray dawn of the morning I saw them wending their way over the hill until they disappeared in the shadow of the forest. And I heard many a man say, how happy he would be if he was able to go with them to that great and free, new country. That was the first time I heard of America, and my childish imagination

took possession of a land covered, partly with majestic trees, partly with flowery prairies, immeasurable to the eye, and intersected with large rivers and broad lakes—a land where everybody could do what he thought best, and where nobody was poor because everybody was free. And later, when I was old enough to read, and descriptions of this country, and books on American history fell into my hands, the offspring of my imagination acquired the colors of reality, and I began to exercise my brain with the thought, what man might be and become when left perfectly free to himself. And still later, when ripening into manhood, I looked up from my school books into the stir and bustle of the world, and the trumpet-tones of struggling humanity struck my ear and thrilled my heart, and I saw my nation shake their chains in order to burst them, and I heard a gigantic, universal shout for Liberty rising up to the skies; and, at last, after having struggled manfully and drenched the earth of Father-land with the blood of thousands of noble beings, I saw that nation crushed down again, not only by overwhelming armies, but by the dead weight of customs and institutions, and notions, and prejudices, which past centuries had heaped upon her shoulders, and which a moment of enthusiasm, however sublime, could not destroy—then I consoled an almost despondent heart with the idea of a youthful people, and of original institutions, clearing the way for an untrammelled development of the ideal nature of man. Then I turned my eyes instinctively across the Atlantic Ocean, and America, and Americanism, as I fancied it, became to me the last depository of the hopes of all true friends of Humanity.

I say all this, not as though I indulged in the presumptuous delusion, that my personal feelings and experience could be of any interest to you, but in order to show you what America is to the thousands of thinking men in the old world, who, disappointed in their fondest hopes, and depressed by the saddest experience, cling with their last remnant of confidence in human nature to the last spot on earth, where man is free to follow the road to attainable perfection, and where, unbiased by the disastrous influence of traditional notions, customs and institutions, he acts on his own responsibility.

Judge for yourselves whether the glorious position in which this country was placed, from the beginning, did not justify the most exalted expectations.

Cast a look back upon the time when the first permanent settlements were founded upon this continent. While the grand reformatory movement of the sixteenth century, with its progressive ideas, had plunged the old world into endless confusion: while the very wheel of progress seemed to grind and crush one generation after another: while the ideas which concerned the highest interests of humanity, seemed to call into their service the basest and the most violent passions of the human heart: while in all Europe the wars of great principles degenerated into wars of general devastation, suddenly a new country opens its boundless fields to those great ideas, for the realization of which the old world seemed no longer to be wide enough.

A new continent has been discovered. The grandeur and the abundance of its resources baffle all the efforts of human imagination. The thin and scattered population of savages that inhabit it, try in vain to impede the progress of civilized men into the unbroken wilderness. The greediness of the gold hunting adventurer at first takes possession of the new conquest. But his inordinate appetites being disappointed, he gradually abandons the field to men in whose hearts the future of the new world is sleeping unborn. While the coast of Virginia receives a motley immigration, led and ruled by men of ideas and enterprise, the sturdiest champions of principle descend upon the stony shores of New England. While the southern colonies are settled under the auspices of lordly merchants and proprietaries, original democracy plants its banner upon Plymouth Rock. Mercantile speculation, aristocratic ambition, and stern virtue, that seeks freedom and nothing but freedom, lead the most different classes of people—different in origin, habits, persuasion and principle—upon the virgin soil, and entrusts to them the common task of inaugurating a new era. Nor is the privilege of occupying the new land of promise confined to one nationality alone. While the Anglo Saxon takes possession of New England, Virginia and Pennsylvania, the Frenchmen plants his colonies on the soil of French Florida, and the

interior of the Continent; the Hollander creates New Netherlands on the banks of the Hudson, the Swede, led there by the great mind of Oxenstiern, occupies the banks of the Delaware, the Spaniard maintains himself in Peninsular Florida, and a numerous immigration of Germans, who followed the call of religious freedom, and of Irishmen, gradually flowing in, seatters itself over all that vast extent of country. And although the Anglo Saxon establishes and maintains his ascendancy, yet he does not absorb these different nationalities, the peculiar characteristics of which are ready to be blended with his own, by the all-assimilating power of freedom. Soon all the social and national elements of the whole civilized world are represented in the new land; every people, every creed, every class of society have contributed their shares to the wonderful mixture, out of which is to grow the great nation of the new world.

As they grow, a feeling of their peculiar wants and of their increasing strength grows with them, and soon they see, that a dependence on the old world will no longer agree with their conceptional positions and their manifest destiny. The new and original elements, which constitute the people of the new world, can no longer be clogged by the fetters which bind them to an old decrepit order of things. They can no longer submit to rules which are not of their own making. They have gradually shaken the European dust from their feet, and the fresh breeze of the primeval forest has inspired their souls with the proud idea of independent progress. Then they begin to think of entering the great family of nations as an independent member. The natural necessity of Democratic life in the new country has exercised an equalizing influence on the different elements of the population. The Puritan has not retained all the stern asperity of his original character, and the exclusiveness of his religious doctrines has gradually given way to the universal sway of religious freedom. The cavalier spirit, under whose auspices some of the southern colonies were founded, has failed in fastening aristocratic institutions, after the European model, upon the people of that region. Nationalities and creeds have become mingled together, and former differences are merged in

one great common interest. So they form the design of an independent Republic. The sublime excitement of the crisis calls great men from the ranks of the people, and all classes of population, so different in origin, in belief and customs, join hands in the great undertaking. Their natural instinct inspires them with a just appreciation of their mission.

They will found a nation, not in the old traditional sense of the word—a nation springing from one family, one tribe, one country—but a nation incorporating the vital and vigorous elements of all civilized nations on earth; they will found the *nation of man*.

They will establish a Republic; not a Republic of Englishmen alone, or of any other branch of the human family exclusively; nor a Republic of Puritans or Episcopalians alone, or any other religious denomination exclusively; nor a Republic in which a privileged class of citizens, as in Rome and the Italian cities, should have exclusive rights; they will establish the republic of equal rights, *the Republic of man*.

They will inaugurate a new political creed, unlike that of the Republics of Greece, which confined political rights to a comparatively small number; unlike that of the Roman Republic, whose citizens took pride in oppressing the world; but a creed founded upon the natural right of *all men to govern themselves*.

They will inaugurate a new epoch of civilization, unlike that of most of the European nations, which is confined to the higher classes of society, and leaves the masses far behind; but a civilization which is based upon the principle of human equality, and rising from the heart of the people at large, contemplates the mental and moral elevation of all men.

In founding the nation of man, they threw open the gates of the Republic to the oppressed of all countries, and invited them to join in the great enterprise.

In establishing the Republic of man, they discarded all distinctions of nation, creed, and social standing, and based their political institutions upon the solid basis of equal rights.

In guaranteeing the self-government of man, they guarded against privileges and the oppressive centralization of power,



recognized in others the same natural rights they claimed for themselves, proclaimed peace to all nations on earth, and laid down the leading principles of their foreign policy.

And thus they based the existence and the future development of this country upon a *broad cosmopolitan idea*. And this cosmopolitan idea is what I call *Americanism*. It embodies the universality of rights, and the universality of progress. It embraces the solution of the great problem of the faculty of man to be free, and to govern himself.

Let me say a few words on its different bearings.

#### AMERICAN NATIONALITY.

It is a noticeable fact, in the history of the world, that nations, like individuals, seem to have but a limited term of life allotted to them, and that, when they have long subsisted exclusively on the resources of their own national forces, they gradually lose the original vigor of their character and die the death of decrepitude. From time to time, violent, irresistible hurricanes sweep over the world, blowing the most different elements of the human family together, and the general confusion then becomes the genesis of new eras of civilization. Then the sceptre of empire—the hegemonia—the great leadership passes from one people to another; the young and vigorous snatch it from the hands of the old and decrepit.—The oldest traditions of the human race speak of such great revulsions and general migrations, which became the origin of successive periods of progress, in which one people took the lead and dragged its neighbors behind, and if we could but lift the veil which covers the remotest history of the Asiatic nations, we would discover the first scenes and acts of the great drama, of which the downfall of the Roman Empire is a portion.

Even the greatest people of European antiquity could not escape this fate. Greece outlived her glory, and Rome sunk down under the ponderous splendor of her vast empire. Then the dark forests of the North poured forth a barbarous but vigorous multitude, who trampled into ruins the decrepit civiliza-

tion of the Roman world, but infused new blood into the veins of old Europe, grasped the great ideas of Christianity with a bloody but firm hand, and a new period of original progress sprang out of the seeming devastation. The German element took the helm of history. But in the course of time the development of things arrived at a new turning point. The great religious reformation of the sixteenth century, infused the spirit of Individualism into the hearts of civilized humanity. But continental Europe appeared unable to incorporate the new and progressive ideas growing out of that spirit in organic political institutions. While the heart of Europe was ravaged by a series of religious wars, the Anglo-Saxons of England attempted what other nations seemed unable to accomplish. But clinging too fast to the traditions of past centuries, they succeeded but imperfectly. They failed in separating the Church from the State, and in realizing the Cosmopolitan tendency of the new principle. Then the time of a new migration was at hand, and that migration rolled its waves towards America.

The old process repeated itself under new forms, milder and more congenial to the humane ideas it represented. It is now not a barbarous multitude pouncing upon old and decrepit empires—not a violent concussion of tribes, accompanied by all the horrors of general devastation; but we see the vigorous elements of all nations peaceably congregating and mingling together on virgin soil, on an open field, where the back-woodman's axe is the only battle-hatchet of civilization; led together by the irresistible attraction of free and broad principles, undertaking to commence a new Era in the history of the world, without first destroying the results of the progress of past periods; undertaking to found a new Cosmopolitan nation, without marching over the dead bodies of slain millions.

Here the Anglo-Saxon, now the leader in the practical movement, contributes his spirit of independence, of daring enterprise and of indomitable perseverance; the German, the original leader in the movement of ideas, his spirit of inquiry and of quick and thoughtful application; the Irishman, the impulsive vivacity of the Celtic race; and the Frenchman, the Scandinavian, the Hollander, the Italian, the Spaniard, the Scotchman,

all offer their national peculiarities to that collective nationality, which is to blend the vital qualities of all nations to one great harmony, and which by crossing them with all others, is to preserve them in youthful vigor.

And thus was founded the great colony of free humanity, which has not old England alone, but *the world*, for its mother country.

That selfishness and narrow ambition should often lead the minds of individuals to misunderstand great ideas, and to mistake great ends, is a thing of too common occurrence to be astonishing. The destinies of men are often greater than men themselves, and a good many are swerving from the path of glory by not obeying the true instincts of their nature. The Anglo-Saxon may justly take pride in the growth and development of this country, and if he ascribes most of it to the undaunted spirit of his race, we may not accuse him of overweening self-glorification. He possesses, in an eminent degree, the enviable talent of acting, when others only think: of promptly executing his own ideas, and of appropriating the ideas of other people to his own use. There is no other race, that would at so early a day have founded the stern democracy of the Plymouth settlement; no other race that would have stood the trials and defied the hardships of the original settlers' life so victoriously as this. No other nationality, perhaps, possesses in so high a degree not only the daring spirit of independent enterprise, but at the same time the stubborn steadfastness necessary for the final execution of great designs. The Anglo-Saxon spirit has been the Locomotive of progress; but let us never forget, that this locomotive would be of but little use to the world, if it refused to draw its train on the iron highway, and carry its valuable freight towards its destination.—That train consists of the vigorous elements of all nations; that freight is the vital ideas of our age, and that destination is universal freedom, and the ideal development of man.

The ambition of those who want to see a purely Anglo-Saxon empire established on this continent, falls short of the greatness of this country's destiny. It originated in a, perhaps, pardonable pride, basing exclusive claims upon the exploits of a

noble ancestry. But it lowers those exploits by stripping them of their noblest tendency—their Cosmopolitan bearing. It reclines supinely upon past glory, unmindful of a more glorious future. Satisfied that the Anglo-Saxon spirit has commenced one of the greatest enterprises the world ever witnessed, it seems inclined to disregard the greatest part of its mission—to be mainly instrumental in completing the success of the undertaking.

Besides, this exclusive ambition comes too late. The natural development of things has overridden its narrow tendency.—The *nation of man* has thrown roots in the virgin soil of the new world in spite of it. What do you call an American now-a-days? How many of the thirty millions inhabiting this Republic; how many even of those who can trace their ancestry even to the original settlements of New England or Virginia, can analyze the blood in their veins, without finding a German or Irish or Hollandish or French or Scandinavian drop in it?—And what may be said of the blood is no less applicable to the character. Before long, the only pure Anglo-Saxons will be those who have most recently come over from Old England, and I do not know whether you would be inclined to call them, unqualifiedly, the best and purest Americans.

In the face of the great Cosmopolitan mission of this country, this exclusive pride of Anglo-Saxondom dwindles down to the small dimensions of silly aristocratism; for, basing its claims upon things done by others, it has nothing of that moral aristocracy, which derives its right from accumulated and daily accumulating personal merit. No true American can nourish it, for no man who understands the true greatness of the Anglo-Saxon race can have invented it. It is unproductive of anything that is great. It has borne nothing but barren prejudices, which rise and go down with the individuals who cherish them.

But now look at that glorious valley which stretches from the western slope of the Alleghanies to the Rocky Mountains; that valley of Jehosaphat, where nations assemble in order to celebrate the resurrection of human freedom. Has the world ever seen such a peaceable mingling of the most heterogeneous elements of population, the most different customs and lan-

guages! And yet, is not this motley crowd bound firmly together by the all-assimilating power of Liberty, and by the instinctive consciousness of great common interests? Is not this a people more vigorous than all others? Is not this a nation, *the nation of man*? Have they not created the freest, the happiest, and the most prosperous states on the face of the earth? There is *the productiveness* of the Cœsmopolitan idea, upon which the existence of the American nation rests, in all the glory of reality. There is the colony of free humanity, whose mother-country is the world, in the splendor of its efficiency. By its fruits you shall know it.

This is what I call Americanism in a national point of view.

#### FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES.

The nation of man being founded, it was to be organized as the *Republic of man*.

The fathers of this Republic, when cutting loose from Great Britain, justified their action by declaring that "all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." From this general principle they derived their claim to Independence, and on the foundation of this principle they built up the institutions of this Republic. The whole structure was to be the living incarnation of this idea.

It has been used as a standing argument against a democratic organization of society, that, whatever its seeming blessings and beauties may be, it is always short-lived; that it lacks stability. I have heard grave savants make this assertion, trying to prove its truth by reference to the Republics of Antiquity. A people, they say, may indulge in this brilliant delusion for some-time, but soon one class of society will wage war against another; the unruly and ignorant elements of the population will disturb the harmony of democratic life, and despotism will grow out of popular leadership. This is not without a semblance of truth. But they forget, that the Republics of Antiquity, although containing elements of Democracy, contained at the same time the elements of oppression; by according privi-

leges to one class of society, they led the other class upon the path of turbulent and rebellious opposition; they recognized and guaranteed the *rights of the citizen*, at the same time disregarding and leaving unprotected the natural *rights of man*: their doctrine of rights was not founded upon the basis of universal reciprocity. Their citizenship was not a natural right, but a privilege. What the citizen of Rome claimed for himself, he did not respect in others; his own greatness was his only object; his own Liberty, as he looked at it, gave him the right and the power to oppress his fellow beings. His democracy, instead of elevating mankind to its own level, trampled upon the rights of man. And so it bore in itself the germs of self-destruction.

The American Republic was the first which was founded upon the broad doctrine, that not the citizens of a certain limited political organization alone, but all men were created free and equal. The Fathers of this Republic, in laying down this doctrine as the very foundation of their political creed, built up the institutions of this country upon the basis of an universal principle, which is the most progressive and at the same time the most conservative one. The most progressive, for it takes even the lowest members of the human family out of their degradation, and inspires them with the elevating consciousness of equal human dignity. The most conservative, for it makes a common cause out of individual rights. From the equality of rights springs the identity of the highest interests; and from this identity a strict solidarity of all members of the body politic. When the rights of one cannot be infringed without a violation of the rights of all others, the rights of all are safe against individual usurpation. General solidarity of interests is the only thing that can guarantee the stability of democratic institutions. Equality of rights embodied in general self-government, is the great moral element of true democracy, and the only reliable safety-valve in the machinery of modern society.

It is astonishing that influential politicians of this country should have been willing to sacrifice this great principle to ephemeral expediency. Undoubtedly, even the best of human institutions have their local and temporary difficulties and in-

conveniencies connected with them ; but true wisdom and statesmanship will never lose sight of fundamental principles, when passing abuses are to be corrected.

For the sake of argument let us admit that a majority of foreign emigrants are not as capable to take part in the government of this country as the man who was fortunate enough to drink the milk of Liberty in his cradle ; and that certain religious denominations nourish principles which are hardly consonant with the doctrines of true democracy :—let us admit that the origin of the so-called “ American movement ” is not to be found in passion and winton prejudice alone, but in the sincere opinion, that the influence exercised on our political life by the foreign population and certain religious sects, is detrimental to the efficient working of democratic institutions, and that in order to paralyze this dangerous influence, it would be advisable to strip them of their political rights :—view all this from the side of its most captivating plausibility, and what will, in your opinion, be the true American solution of this dilemma ?

The problem involves two questions—one of principle, and one of policy.

As to the first, I can do no better than quote the language of one of the truest Americans I ever met with—one of Nature's noblemen : I mean Gerrit Smith—a man whose opinions I would honor, even when questioning their correctness, for I feel like uncovering my head to the purity of his intentions. He says :

“ Citizenship, like voting, is a natural right ; and hence, all who assume to create it are guilty of supplanting the claims of nature with their own uncalled for creations. They who make the right of voting in our country turn on a certain amount of learning, or on several years personal acquaintance with our Institutions, give but too much countenance to those who make the color of the skin a disqualification for voting or for citizenship. In both cases principle is violated, and a precedent is set for further and indefinite violations of natural rights. Too long have the people consented to receive as franchises, what is inherent and God-given. Resolving natural rights into privileges has, in every age of the world, been a trick of tyrants. When

the emigrant has afforded sufficient proof of making America his home, Government *is not to make him* a voter, but simply *to recognize him* as such. In whatever country a man has his home, there has he a *natural* right to citizenship, and to the ballot-box, and to the soil also : just as natural as to life, and light, and air. Despotism will continue on earth as long as the people consent to surrender their natural rights in exchange to grants from government."

These are the words of an American, inspired by the true dignity of American citizenship. They deserve to be inscribed on the gate-posts of this Republic.

So much for the question of principle. As to the question of policy, I have been taught by history, and by personal experience, that nothing which is wrong in principle can be right in practice. A violation of natural rights can never serve to maintain institutions which are founded upon natural rights.

If it is true that solidarity of interests among the inhabitants of a Republic is the most reliable safeguard of democratic institutions, and that this solidarity is impossible without equality of rights, you have but to disfranchise a portion of the people in order to compromise your future by disowning your past. Then you will base the institutions of this country upon a difference of rights, between different classes of people.—Refusing to acknowledge the right to vote in the foreign-born population as *a natural right*, you confer it upon the native *as a privilege* ; for *natural rights must be general, or they cannot be natural*.

And thus you will subvert the fundamental principles of this government. You will create a political aristocracy on one, and a political plebs on the other side—a class of governing and of governed people. That plebs will be humbled, but they will not lose the consciousness of their natural rights ; they will be the more aspiring, and unruly the more they are humbled. You will create a class of people, who will have a right to revolt, because they are stripped of the right to govern themselves. I admit, you will be strong enough to keep down all dissatisfaction, but only by dint of the same means by which dissatisfaction is kept down in other countries. But then, what have you



gained? You will accustom one class of people to rule others, and another class of people to submit to the rule of others.—Inequality of rights must result in oppression, and oppression creates tyrants on one, and slaves on the other side, but no true patriots on either.

Force, instead of right; privilege, instead of equality, being once the leading principles of your policy, you will have no power to stem the current. There will be other abuses to be corrected, other inconveniences to be remedied, other supposed dangers to be obviated, and the disfranchisement of one class of people will be used as a welcome precedent for further encroachments. Having once knowingly disregarded natural rights, the ruling parties will soon accustom themselves to consult only their interests, where fundamental principles ought to be their guide. A policy of expediency will succeed to the government of principle, and your democratic institutions will fall into the fatal snare of the unscrupulous selfishness of individuals and parties.

Where is the greater danger? Will you in order to guard against the inexperience of the foreign-born voter, and the aspirations of the Roman Hierarchy, put the axe to the very roots of democratic institutions, to the equality of rights?—Will you in order to defend your Liberty, undermine its foundations with your own hands? This reminds me of the soldier, who for fear of being shot in battle, committed suicide on the march. It is that ridiculous policy of despair, which gives up the ship, when there is a cloud in the sky. With childish petulance, it repudiates the fundamental principle of genuine democracy, because the practice of equal rights is distasteful to some exquisites.

How pitiable and poor is this mis-named American policy, in comparison to that broad and generous confidence in the efficiency of true democratic institutions, which led the fathers of this Republic to invite all people to the enjoyment of equal rights! They were not ignorant of the difficulties growing out of their doctrines, but they believed that true democracy bears in itself the remedies for all abuses that may be connected with it.

It is true, it gives rights to the ignorant, and power to the inexperienced but by the very same process it puts the means of education within the reach of all. It is an old dodge of the advocates of despotism throughout the world, to assert that people, who are inexperienced in self-government, are not fit for Liberty, and ought to be educated under the rule of others.— But at the same time despotism will never offer them an opportunity to acquire experience in self-government, lest the people might suddenly be fit for liberty. To this treacherous sophistry, true Americanism opposes the noble doctrines, that Liberty is the best school for Liberty, and that self-government cannot be learned but by practising it. There is nothing that makes man better understand his interests, both political and private, than the independent management of his own affairs, on his own responsibility; and nothing inspires him with a stronger notion of his duties, *than the enjoyment of the rights from which they arise*. The atmosphere of Liberty has a wonderful influence on the minds of men; it arouses the legitimate pride of human dignity; it enlarges the heart, it quickens the understanding; and a few years of education in the school of that best of all schoolmasters, whose name is self-government, may be sufficient to turn the most submissive subject of an arbitrary government into a self-relying and efficient citizen of a Republic.

Nor have the dangers, which are said to arise from the intrigues of the Roman Hierarchy, any terrors for me. If it be true, that the Roman, or any other Church plants the seeds of superstition, it is no less true that Liberty sows broad-cast the seeds of truth and enlightenment. Give them a fair struggle, and the victory is not doubtful. That victory may be slow, but it will be conclusive. And as to religious fanaticism, it may prosper under oppression; it may feed on persecution, but it is powerless against genuine democracy. It may indulge in short-lived freaks of passion, or in wily intrigues,—but it will die of itself, for its lungs are not adapted to breathe the atmosphere of equal rights. Drag the shark of the sea into the air, and the monster will perhaps struggle fearfully, and frighten you with the powerful blows of his tail, and the terrible array of his teeth, but you leave him quietly to die, and he will die. But

engage with him in a hand to hand struggle, even then, and the last of his convulsions may fatally punish your rash attempt. Against fanaticism, genuine democracy wields an irresistible weapon ; *it is Toleration*. Toleration will not strike down the fanatic, but it will quietly and gently disarm him. In a democratic community it is argument, not force, that governs ; and where argument is the ruling power, there the weapons of fanaticism will drop harmless to the ground. But fight fanaticism with fanaticism, and you will restore it to its own congenial element. It is like Antaeus, who gained strength when touching his native earth.

Whoever reads the history of this country, calmly and thoroughly, cannot but discover, that religious liberty is slowly but steadily rooting out the elements of superstition, and even of prejudice. It has dissolved the wars of sects, to which persecution was characteristic, into a contest of abstract opinions, which creates convictions without oppressing men. By recognizing perfect freedom of inquiry, it will engender among men of different belief that mutual respect of true convictions, which makes inquiry earnest and discussion fair. It will recognise as supremely inviolable, what Roger Williams, one of the most luminous stars in the American sky, called the "sanctity of conscience." Then fanaticism will become, not only powerless, but ridiculous. Whatever the designs of any clerical organization against popular freedom may be, as long as they cannot be executed without the co-operation of a large number of American freemen, they may keep your vigilance awake, but they ought never to betray you into a violation of principles ; and political or religious freedom is the only reliable safeguard against the preponderance of aspiring clerical organizations. It may permit them an outward show of growth, but it will loosen their interior consistency. It will turn all attempts at usurpation against their authors.

Before taking leave of this branch of the subject, I am obliged to allude to an institution, the very existence of which seems to controvert all I have said of the American doctrine of human equality. I mean the institution of slavery. This being one of the burning political questions of our day, I would

have abstained from calling your attention to it in this discourse, if the subject did not imperiously demand it. I will confine myself to a single remark on this institution.

If all I have said of the principle of human equality being the foundation of our democratic institutions; being the safety-valve in the machinery of modern society; being the only guarantee of the stability of republican government; if all this is true, what influence must an institution have, which creates a class of masters, and a class of bondmen, dividing society into portions, whose vital interests are at war with each other, and putting the interest of the slave-holder above the interest of the citizen? There is a danger, which only blindness cannot see, and which only stubborn party prejudice will not see. Whatever the fitness or unfitness for self-government of the colored man may be, this is not the turning point of the question.—The oppressive spirit of the master is no less inconsistent with true democracy, than the oppressed spirit of the slave. A democratic system of government is certainly strong enough to overcome all local and temporary difficulties connected with it, but it can bear no inconsistencies in fundamental principles.—There is a thing, which stands above the command of the most ingenious of politicians: and that is *the logic of things and events*. It cannot be turned and twisted by artificial arrangements and delusive settlements; it will go its own natural way with the steady step of Fate. It will force you, with uncompromising severity, to choose between two social organizations, one of which is founded upon privilege, and the other upon the principle of equal rights. It will teach you how essential it is in a democratic community, not only that there be no slaves, *but that there be no masters*. And it is not hazardous to predict, that if the theories engendered by the system of slavery are suffered to outgrow the equalizing tendency of true democracy, the American Republic will soon meet with the fate of Rome and the other Republics of Antiquity. The struggle which is going on about that institution, concerns the vitality of our democratic system of government, and the decision of that struggle will decide of the stability of this Republic.

But I will retract nothing that I have said of the principle

of equality, being the American doctrine. He has not read, or not understood, the proudest pages of American history, who denies that the fathers of this Republic intended to have the institution of slavery yield to the principle of equality, and he heeds very little the signs of our times, who does not see, that the most vigorous elements of this Republic are arrayed against the pernicious system.

The battle is fairly engaged. Slavery may be able to win delusive victories, but it will never have moral force enough to stand a defeat. The first great defeat will be equivalent to a total rout. Its army once beaten will be dispersed, and then all those who were pressed into its service by interests foreign to theirs, will speedily shake off their delusions and join the cause which, in the nature of things, is their own.

I have abiding faith in the original vigor of this people, and in no very distant future I see a day coming, when our children will ask themselves, not without shame and incredulous astonishment, how it was possible that the system of slavery should have found serious advocates 80 years after the fathers of this Republic had built up the glorious institutions of this country, upon the basis of human equality. Then there will be no longer a man insane enough to quote the Dred Scott decision as a correct interpretation of the Declaration of Independence.

#### AMERICAN SELF-GOVERNMENT.

So much for the fundamental principle upon which the Republic of man was founded. The political organization which the people gave themselves, corresponded strictly with its leading doctrine. The people of the different States of this Republic, especially of the Free States, established and developed a system of self-government more perfect than in any other country on earth, except Switzerland.

It is one of the essential mistakes of prominent political theorists on the European continent, that democracy and self-government consist in the power of the people to elect their rulers, and in a certain limitation of the executive power by the legislative branch of government. This is what they

call the division of power, a thing which may be shaped perfectly consistent with a centralized system of administration.— And thus there is for them no contradiction between centralization and democracy.

The genius of the American people has created a system widely different from this. Recognizing the principle of equality for all men, the organization of society was to be such as to give free play to all legitimate peculiarities. It was not the purpose of our political institutions to press man into the mould of uniform rules and regulations, but they were intended to have elasticity enough to conform to local and individual wants and necessities. American self-government, therefore, means not merely the faculty of the people to elect their chief-magistrates and the legislative branch of government, but it means, that all such functions which can be exercised by direct and immediate action of the people, be not delegated to agents and plenipotentiaries; that the people *be governed as little, and govern themselves in detail as much, as possible*. The division of power is, therefore, not confined to a certain mutual limitation between the executive and legislative branches of government, but it goes down in an organic way from the organization of the supreme power to the organization of the meanest body politic in the state.

Some of the most prominent political writers of our days have discovered great dangers to political freedom in the equality of all citizens, believing, that equality produces a tendency for centralization. This may be the case in such countries *where there is the spirit of equality without the spirit of self-government*. There the governmental power, which, although springing from the people, retains a great amount of independence, is regarded with a certain superstitious awe.— Seeing almost all political action issuing from the central government, people there are apt to delude themselves with the belief, that government can do and accomplish everything, and thus, addressing all their behests to, and expecting the redress of all their grievances from, that mysterious source of omnipotence: they are rather willing to strengthen than to weaken it.

But in this country the greatest things have sprung from

independent individual action. Man relies upon himself, and all he wants government to do, is, to guarantee free scope to his individual energy and enterprise. He wants liberty for himself, and he will take care of the rest. Thus he stands above government. Although he is willing to submit to the dictates of the majority in their legitimate sphere—that is to say, in all things that cannot be done by independent individual action—he will not submit to the *tyranny* of majorities, which consist in encroachments upon individual rights. Against that tyranny, the most dangerous in democratic states, he guards by dismembering and ramifying political power into an infinite number of small functions, reserving to local and individual self-government all that can be accomplished by it.

Besides this, where government springs directly from the will of the people, where it changes hands so often, and where the people are making and shaping government daily by active control, and the most unrelenting criticism, there governments care more about what the people say, than people care about what the governments do.

As long as this spirit prevails in this Republic, there will be little danger of oppressive centralization.

The American spirit of self-government, based upon the principle of equal rights, does not confine its influence upon the working of our home-institutions within the present geographical limits of this Republic, but it determines, at the same time, the spirit of our foreign policy. The tyrannical tendency which lay hidden in the organization of the Roman Republic, showed its most hideous features strongest in her foreign policy. When that Republic undertook to build up her greatness on the despotic supremacy with which it ruled other people, the axe was put to the roots of popular liberty in Rome herself. To rule and to submit, seems to involve the most irreconcilable contradiction. But the effects of either on a people approach identity. He who disregards natural, inalienable rights in others is ill adapted to maintain them for himself. Despotism and oppression have an irresistible re-acting tendency. To conquer foreign countries, and to hold them in a state of subjection, would be the first step towards the surrender of our

own independence. The principle of the equal rights of all men being the basis of our political and national existence, the establishment of a colonial system like that of England or of proconsular governments, like those of Rome, would be so inconsistent with the spirit of our institutions as to amount to suicide. From that time the rightful existence of despotism would be admitted, and the original American doctrine that man shall govern himself, and that central governments are instituted for the only purpose of guaranteeing and organizing self-government, would lose the support of fact. An offensive war will therefore always be inconsistent with true Americanism, and the only way in which this Republic may aggrandize herself, is, either by the spontaneous accession of the people of other countries, or by extending aid to other nations who desire to be free and independent. If you will call this conquest, then to be conquered by the American Republic means nothing but to subscribe to the Declaration of Independence. As long as this country remains true to that federal system, *which is the national form of self-government*, there will be little danger in expansion and aggrandizement. However large it may become, it will be nothing else but a vast association of independent men, united for the protection of common interests, the principal of which is the maintenance of their own liberty. Then the American Congress will be in reality, what in Europe the boldest friends of humanity dreamed of establishing: the permanent peace-Congress of the new world.

And here let me add a few words on the foreign policy of this country, as it is at present situated. Our influence with foreign governments does not depend upon the dexterity of our diplomatic, nor on the strength of our military and naval establishments. It may be justly said, that, as long as the American Republic remains true to her original democratic character, all the despots on earth are her natural enemies and all the nations her natural friends. This circumstance suggests what the true elements of our strength are.

Even in most of those countries whose destinies seem to be swayed by arbitrary governments, public opinion has become a formidable power. It is not controlled by forms laid down in



written constitutions, nor does it shape its course according to custom and usage. It springs up right from the heart of the intelligent classes of the people, and although its dictates may sometimes be disregarded by despotic rulers, yet the struggle against it has so often proved disastrous to those in power, that even the most tyrannical governments try to propitiate and to compromise with it, when they see their inability to control it. To commence and to carry on a war *without* the support of public opinion, would be a difficult thing to most European governments. But to commence and to carry on a war *in direct opposition* to the current of public opinion, will hardly be attempted by any. Such an attempt sealed the fate of the greatest warrior of our times—Napoleon. The enthusiasm of his prætorians, the bravest army in the world, could no longer sustain him, when the heart of the people had forsaken him.

There is no nation in Europe that is not constantly endeavoring to better its condition and aspiring to freedom, even if then it does not know how to attain, or when attained, how to preserve it. It is natural, therefore, that public opinion, springing right from the heart of the people, must sympathise with a foreign power whose policy is dictated by true liberal principles. Hence public opinion in foreign countries will always be our natural ally, as long as by faithfulness to true principles we are the natural ally of the people—that is to say, true advocates of the rights of man. This alliance is based upon reciprocity, and if duly cultivated, it will be strong enough to make all serious resistance to any just and equitable demands of ours impracticable, even with such governments whose hatred would rather expunge this Republic from the face of the earth.

To gain and to preserve the confidence and the hearty good will of our natural ally, the wily arts of secret diplomacy are but little required. People abroad hear, and read, and know a little more of us than the sayings, and writings, and doings of our diplomatic representatives ; very little that happens in this country escapes the eager notice of close observers, and it is not always the most favorable side of American life which is most ostentatiously spread before the European public. They keep track of our development with the attentive eye of interested

parties. The supporters of despotism watch us in order to show up our failings; and the people look to us, in order to keep alive their faith in democratic institutions. And thus our behaviour here, determines public opinion there. The more we deviate from true principles in our home policy—the more we forfeit the confidence of people abroad, the weaker our foreign policy will be. And the better we demonstrate by facts, that our splendid theories and professions have risen into bodily existence, and that our democracy, from a mere dogmatic abstraction, has become a living reality, the warmer will be the friendship of nations for this Republic and the stronger our foreign policy. It may be said, therefore, that most of the strength of our diplomacy grows here, and that the same things which make us free and prosperous at home, make us esteemed and formidable abroad. If we are true to ourselves, we are true to others, and others will be true to us. Then we shall have no need of a numerous hireling soldiery, nor of a costly naval establishment; for we shall keep a standing army right in the heart of foreign countries—the most glorious army ever heard of: it is the confidence and friendship of nations. This is the true strength of American foreign policy, and the statesman who would place it upon any other ground, may be justly accused of not appreciating the exalted position and the great destiny of this country.

#### AMERICAN CIVILIZATION.

The peculiar origin and organization of American society cannot fail to bring forth and to develop new features of civilization.

Indeed, the people of this country are placed in a peculiarly happy position. No other nation within the recollection of mankind was composed of such a variety of vigorous elements as this. Never had the component elements of a people such free play and unbounded sway as here. Never was man so perfectly free of outward pressure, so independent of a foreign will, as here. Never had man such an immeasurable field of action before him; never had he such an opportunity to show to

what degree of perfection human nature can be developed under the fertilizing influence of Liberty. And more than this: for thousands of years have the nations of the earth treasured up their ideas, their discoveries and inventions, the results of their meditation and their scientific and artistical pursuits; and now, unlike the people of Greece and Rome, who in the first centuries of their national existence, were narrowed down to the resources of their own genius, unlike the German element, which after having marched over the ruins of Roman civilization had to commence anew, the young American people stands upon the highest eminence of the modern age, overlooking like a grand, immeasurable panorama the results of past centuries, they have only to harvest in order to possess—only to gather in order to enjoy. All the nations of the globe come and offer their treasures to the cosmopolitan nation, and upon the basis of gathered results has America to build up her own civilization.

And, nevertheless, it is said that the American people have failed, so far, to reach that height of mental culture which other nations can boast of. And undoubtedly this is true in a great many respects; but it is owing to circumstances which by themselves inspire us with well founded hopes for the future.

In colonial times American civilization shaped itself as much as possible after the model of the mother countries, especially of England. Their political connection with the English government necessarily turned the eyes of the people, especially of the higher and leading classes, upon English society and produced a natural tendency to conform their manners, their social life, and their way of thinking to those of the old world. It was the ambition of a good many not to be Americans—that is colonials—but to be considered *English* gentlemen. The Declaration of Independence, in dissolving the political connection, proclaimed at the same time the independent development of American civilization. It placed it upon the basis of a free cosmopolitan nationality. But this change could not be consummated in a day. The original elements which lay there in a more or less crude state, were to be unfolded by time, and while gradually shaking off their dependence of English civi-

zation, the people of this country could but gradually develop new forms to comparative perfection. Thus, having lost the peculiar graces of colonial civilization imported from abroad, and having had no time yet to develop in a high degree the best features of their originality, the American people are in a state of transition, which is less pleasing to the eye than it will be fertile of results.

It is a very significant fact, that those of the original settlers of this country, who were led here not by a mere spirit of adventure, nor by the mere greediness of gain, but by their desire to be free, succeeded first in shaking off their subserviency to European customs and manners, and in placing the progress of American civilization upon the true ground; while in those portions of this country, which were settled by men of a more adventurous character, the higher classes of the people clung longest to the traditions of European society, and the great masses were slowest in moving forward.

The reasons for this are obvious.

The Puritans of New England were the sternest champions of principle. When they left the old world, the mercenary motives of selfishness had no share in their desire to change their condition. They sought, and they found, upon the rocky shores of New England nothing but a place where they could freely "worship God according to the dictates of their consciences," and where they could conform their social condition to their religious belief. The "salvation of their souls" was their highest object, and to the elevation of the mind they devoted their most anxious care. From this fountain sprang their zealous endeavors to organise popular education. They were the first to establish a system of public schools, the first who "thought upon a college."

I have often heard it asserted, that popular education could not thrive under the influence of a religious spirit, because religion limited the freedom of inquiry. Those who say so, mistake religion for the policy of such clerical organization, which have identified their high spiritual office with the aspirations of wordly ambition and material interests. This is a confusion of ideas.

He who has read history will not deny, that all original attempts at systematic popular education proceeded from the religious instincts of man. In all countries and in all ages, philosophy, in the broadest sense of the term, meaning not only the transcendental and metaphysical speculations of individuals, but also the formation of religious sentiments and ideas into doctrines and dogmas, took upon itself the task to enlighten mankind on the highest interests of the human soul. The necessities of life were the first practical, and religion the first theoretical school of man.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied, that when hierarchical organizations grew out of religious schools, and worldly interests and aspirations corrupted their spiritual cares, and the desire *to rule* supplanted the desire *to enlighten*, and speculating hypocrisy took the place of true devotion resting upon sincere convictions, the name of religion was often used as a snare in which not only the conscience but also the intellect of the masses was held captive. The policy of such clerical organizations was very similar to the policy of despotic governments. But to ascribe their pernicious influence to religion, as such, would be just as erroneous as to ascribe the crimes of despotic governments to the social wants of man in the abstract.

It cannot be denied that where religious feelings were *most independent* and *sincerest*, there popular education was most zealously cared for. So it was with the Puritans of New England.

We may condemn their fierce intolerance, which sprung from suffered persecution, and which gave way to milder feelings as soon as it became apparent that they had to fear neither priest-craft nor king-craft in this country; we may or may not agree with their religious views; we may deem the strict sectarian exclusiveness of their first educational institutions sadly at variance with true democratic principles; but it cannot be denied that their anxious care for popular education was the strongest proof of the sincerity of their religious belief. They not only had sacrificed the comfort of their homes for their religious convictions, but they were so deeply impressed with the invincible truth and the progressive character of their doctrines,

that they put them even into the crucible of science for a test. Thus, in spite of their own intolerant spirit, they planted the seeds of universal toleration. I very well understand the man who disagrees with them, but I pity him who does not respect them.

Thus the place that was destined to become the cradle of American Independence, became first the cradle of American education.

Here, for the first time in the history of the world, education was placed within the reach of *all* children of the people. This was the greatest onward stride democracy had ever made, and the men who ordered in all the Puritan colonies, "that every township after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall appoint one to teach all children to write and read; and where any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families, they shall set up a grammar school; the masters thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university,"—the men, I say, who first ordered thus, deserve no less honor at the hands of the American people than the patriots who signed the Declaration of Independence and the heroes who fought the battles of the Revolution. They have found the true key to democratic Liberty. There may be other means besides popular education to tear the sceptre from the hand of a tyrant, *but there is no other way to place it safely into the hands of the people.*

The establishment of common schools originated that wonderful co-operation of self-government and popular education, than which there is no more powerful and efficient engine of progress. I have mentioned the instructing and elevating influence of self-government on the masses. But as self-government is calculated to turn the results of school education to practical account, and to enlarge them by practice and application to given objects, so the common schools are necessary to place self-government upon the basis of knowledge. In order to be what they ought to be, neither of them can do without the other.

This combination of popular education by common schools and self-government, both common to all, determines the character of **American civilization.**

In this country equality is not limited to the sphere of political rights. True, there is a difference in the social condition of men: but the untiring activity and energy of the people, that restless spirit which shifts from enterprise to enterprise, the frequent and sudden changes of fortune, and the total absence of all fixed barriers between different classes of society, lessens the distance between the rich and the poor. True, there is a certain difference of habits and manners between the population of the cities and of the rural districts; but political rights and interests and the means of elementary education being common to all, there is comparatively little difference in the point of mental culture, except in such States where, unfortunately, an heterogeneous system of labor has infused aristocratic tendencies into the organization of society. Indeed, there are in this country certain small circles which represent the highest order of mental culture: but, on the whole, it may be said that the people group themselves near a certain line of average; neither very much above on one side, nor very much below on the other. In consequence of this, it is true that this country is not adorned with a great number of first class stars in the world of science and literature: that the taste for and culture of fine arts is but poorly developed, and that the American people, even in its wealthier classes, cannot boast of the graces of that refinement, which forms the principal charm of the leading circles of European society. But it is equally true, that while in most European countries the privileged classes enjoy the highest culture and leave the masses back at an immeasurable distance, in America the whole people move onward with steady and almost uniform progress, in which but few take the lead and but few are left behind. In Europe, civilization is dazzling in its results, but it comprehends only individuals; in America, civilization is less brilliant but more solid, for it comprehends the masses. America, therefore, may have but few men of the highest order of erudition, but at the same time it has but few of the lowest degree of ignorance. It cannot be denied, that these characteristics of American civilization limit the flight of individual genius, as far as general ideas are concerned; for, in order to be useful and appreciated, it must re-

main within the reach of the popular understanding: while, in Europe, the ambition of a savant is satisfied when he is understood by a number of select individuals. It is true that, in this country, the loftiest ideas have to wear the homely garb of popular language; but while they appear less brilliant, they are certainly more useful. This same circumstance, which obliges the most superior minds to make their thoughts intelligible to the masses, at the same time enlarges the horizon of popular education in bringing superior ideas in immediate contact with the popular mind. In this way even the higher branches of learning will gradually come within the reach of all.

It has been said that this process will lower the dignity of science, and that by becoming subservient to mere practical pursuits, science will be stripped of its true scientific character. There is, indeed, no doubt that in being clad in popular forms, science is often treated with superficial levity—that profoundness is sacrificed to show, and that sometimes the strangest impositions may be practiced upon the public, who are to a certain degree acquainted with the results of science without being able to sound its sources. All this is true, and only perfected education can remedy the evil. But what *is* the true dignity of science? Does it consist in the cloud of mystery which certain persons endeavor to throw around her? Or shall we shut her up again in the cells of monasteries; or shall we confine her culture to a few privileged individuals and make it unapproachable to the masses? Or shall our scientific men be like Archimedes, who, as Plutarch tells us, “was of so lofty a spirit that he never condescended to write any treatise on the manner of constructing all his engines of offense and defense; and as he held this science of inventing and putting together engines, and all arts, generally speaking, which tended to any useful end in practice, to be vile, low and mercenary, he spent his talents and his studious hours in writing of those things only, whose beauty and subtlety had in them no admixture of necessity. If this be the true dignity of science, what will become of its usefulness? In my opinion, the dignity of men and things consists in the services they render to humanity.

It is true, that the pursuit of knowledge in this country is



largely mixed with motives and impulses foreign to science itself. The impatient greediness of gain has pressed it into its service and led it in the direction of the application of results, rather than in that of the theoretical investigation of causes. But the pursuit of gain itself is scientifically productive, and it cannot be denied that the people of this country, although deficient in theoretical knowledge, and slow at abstract studies, accomplish, by practical experiments, about as much as other people by quiet and abstract meditation. We shall, however, in the course of things, come to a point where all will understand that the practical application of the sciences cannot progress in infinitum unless the theories of them are properly cultivated.

The preference we give to everything that serves practical ends may be carried to excess, and we are liable to neglect those pursuits which grace the mind and elevate the heart. I do not underrate the strengthening influence of practical occupations on the understanding; but I think that a people who devote their undivided attention to material pursuits must, in the course of time, become low in their feelings. Dealing always with actualities, basing all their calculations upon facts as they are, they will, by the force of habit, become inclined to forget that a good many things are not what they ought to be. The Greeks, when calling Hermes at the same time the god of merchants and of thieves, showed by this more significant than flattering combination, that the influence of mere material pursuits upon the human soul was no mystery to them. Commerce and industry, and the pursuit of gain in general, although they make men prudent and energetic, very seldom develop the nobler instincts of the heart. In my opinion, therefore, *the stronger we lean to the side of the practical, the more it is necessary that we should promote by education the culture of the ideal.* In cultivating the noble and beautiful along with the useful, we shall evade that one-sidedness of character which may make a people for a while rich, but not good—powerful, but not great.

I am well aware that the taste for literature and the fine arts cannot be forced upon a people. Nor should, in my opinion, the common schools be overloaded with a multitude of subjects,

which could not be taught well without infringing upon the time necessary for elementary instruction. But in all educational institutes of a higher order, the development of the ideal nature of man should be a principal object. It is often asserted that the study of classical languages and literature, and the cultivation of the fine arts waste the time of the student without fitting him for practical life. And, indeed, if these disciplines were intended for no other purpose than to enable a man to parade a number of Latin and Greek quotations, on occasions of state, as I might have done to-night, if I did not respect my audience too much, then the despisers of the classics would be right enough. But the influence of classical studies on the mind reaches beyond mere information. They lead us irresistibly to an ideal view of things and men. In the literature of antiquity man is magnified above his natural dimensions. We see him mostly divested of the common cares of life and occupied with great things only, whether absorbed in meditative contemplation or active in the great affairs of state. The misty distance which separates us from him, like an airy vision, lends grandeur to all his motions and attitudes; and this spectacle of human life on the grandest scale transports us above the common level of every-day sentiments. This is not all. Classical literature excels all other in the harmonious chastity of form. In a democratic country like this, form is often neglected without necessity, and people are apt to forget what influence the beauty of form exercises upon the mind. It imparts to us a sensitiveness of feeling which often, almost imperceptibly, determines the current of our thoughts. A man will often shrink from a coarse idea because he would shrink from a coarse expression. And thus it may be said that classical studies not only elevate our minds, but enoble our aspirations and chasten our feelings. Such ought to be one of the principal objects of College education.

Nor will, in a democratic country, its effects be confined to those who have enjoyed its immediate benefits. Where men live in a state of equality they will educate each other by mutual influence. As a classical and æsthetic education gives tone to the mind, and even to the character of a man, so great a num-

ber of men so educated will give tone to society, and what comparatively few have acquired by individual efforts will, in multiplied form, be transmitted to many by daily social intercourse. For it is the instinctive desire of man to improve himself, and he will take his models above and not below his level. In this manner a higher order of education will become a common good, and its ennobling and refining influence will gradually pervade all classes of society.

It is, besides, a fortunate circumstance, that rapid progress is made, not in the sciences alone, but also in the facility of teaching and of acquiring them. And in this respect, I think, great service will be done by one of the component elements of the American nationality: I mean the German. I say this, perhaps, not without a slight feeling of national pride, but I really think I am not indulging in an amiable delusion. The Germans have not only a taste for scientific and literary pursuits, but, what is more, they have a scientific conscience. They are earnest in their opinions and indefatigable in inquiry. The German will seldom stop in his investigations before he has arrived at what he firmly believes to be the truth; and if you find a German who teaches something which he does not know himself, you may be sure that he has lost the true characteristics of his nationality. The admixture of the German element to the American mind will, in so far, have a salutary effect on our methods of acquiring knowledge, as it will moderate the hasty and inordinate desire to arrive at the results of science without having laid the foundations deep and firm.

I regret very much to leave the subject of American civilization without having called your attention to several of its distinguishing features. In order to do it full justice, I would have had to speak of American literature—of the newspaper press—of the cosmopolitan character of the English language, and of its peculiar adaptation to the popularization of science and general ideas—of the influence of the cultivation of the fine arts on social pleasures and enjoyments—on the development of customs and manners, &c; but it would be impossible to crowd such a multitude of topics into the limited space of a single Address. I must confine myself to a last summary remark.

As it is the spirit of our political institutions to recognize in all men equal rights, so it is the tendency of American civilization to fit all men for the equal enjoyment of those rights. It places the means of education within the reach of all; it strips even science of its aristocratic exclusiveness, and makes it a democratic institution. It unites the different component elements of the American nationality, and enlists the peculiar forces of each in the service of general progress. It guarantees free development to individuality, and receives in return the contribution of individual talent to the advancement of society. By a general diffusion of its benefits it tends to equalize society not by degrading the superior few, but by elevating the inferior million. Of the cosmopolitan nation organised in the Republic of equal rights, it is to make the representative people of the modern age. These are my ideas of Americanism in respect to civilization.

#### CONCLUSION.

I am arrived at the close of my remarks. Nobody feels more strongly than myself how incomplete they are, and how little my abilities were sufficient to master the comprehensive task. But more forcibly than by other doubts was my mind struck by the question: how will these ideas compare with reality? How will you reconcile to them the corruption which gangrenes our political life; the low, the disgustingly low standard of political morals: the narrowness of views, which tries to undermine the general enjoyment of equal rights; the perversion of fundamental doctrines, which is clad with official honors: the dull indifference of the people at public and private dishonesty: the loose principles upon which our business intercourse is conducted: the brutality and coarseness of feeling, which often disgraces our society even in representative circles? To this question I have but one answer:—Although we may not be able to reach the ideals, which stand before our mental vision, this ought not to deter us from moving in their direction. Ideals are like stars, you will not succeed to touch them with your hands. But like the seafaring man on the desert of waters, you choose

em as your guides, and follow them where they may lead you. There are men calling themselves practical par excellence, who sneer at everything that rises above the common level of every-day notions. Priding themselves upon the small and not always very glorious successess of their material pursuits, they sneer with contempt at all ideal views, that address themselves to the nobler instincts of human nature.

These are the worshippers of *facts*, who avail themselves of things as they are to their personal advantage, and never consider things as to what they ought to be. They acquiesce in everything *that is*, because it stands there with the brutal force of reality. They concede even to vice and the most debased feelings the *right* to exist, because they *do* exist. Such men have a dangerous influence upon society. Successful in the narrow sphere of material occupations, they often appear wise, when they are only sly, and prudent, when they are only small. They often succeeded in palming off for the true wisdom of life what is only the mean shrewdness of selfishness: wielding the formidable weapon of ridicule, their influence upon young hearts and minds is especially disastrous; for many a generous impulse has been stifled by a sneer, and the contemptuous smile of such a practical man has been the death of many a noble aspiration.

When such men succeeded in determining the current of public opinion, they will soon demoralize the principles, lower the feelings, and emasculate the ambition of the people. Incapable of grasping broad and generous ideas, they will view everything from the stand-point of immediate expediency: unable to comprehend great ends, they will endeavor to reduce even the destinies of a nation to the small dimensions of a mercantile enterprise.

This is one of the principal dangers that threaten the development of true Americanism. And it is in this respect that I will say a last word to those young men, who are here arming their minds for the struggles of coming days.

In practical life you will often find the ideals of your hearts so clashing a contrast with reality, that you will be obliged to give up either your nobler instincts and aspirations, or an

immediate practical success. In such moments, which may prove to be the turning points of your lives, I entreat you to remember, that in all ages and in all countries, those men who preserved intact, and undefiled in their hearts the ideals built up in the glowing dreams of a pure and youthful imagination, have achieved more for humanity than the whole host of those, who shaped their principles and their aspirations according to the opportunities of the day and the changing current of popular notions. Keep alive in your hearts, and be never ashamed of that noble ambition which rises above the dusty level of the corrupt sentiments of every-day life. Ambition is a vice only when it is selfish and small. Above all, nourish within yourself the sacred fire of that national ambition, which teaches you that to be a true AMERICAN means nothing but to be a true MAN.







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